12

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you will be able to . . .

LO1 Compare and contrast the authoritarian, permissive, and authoritative styles of teaching.

LO2 Describe the techniques identified by Jacob Kounin for preventing classroom behavior problems.

LO3 Give examples of how at least five of the techniques identified by Redl and Wattenberg for dealing with classroom behavior problems would be used.

LO4 Discuss the prevalence of violence, including bullying, in American schools and identify the major reasons that have been proposed as its cause.

LO5 Describe a classroom-based program and a school-wide program for reducing violence.

By now you have no doubt begun to realize what we pointed out at the beginning of the book: Teaching is a complex enterprise. If not managed properly, an endeavor as complex as teaching can easily become chaotic. When that happens, students are likely to become confused, bored, uninterested, restless, and perhaps even disruptive. But a well-managed classroom is not what many people think: students working silently at their desks (or in front of their computers), speaking only when spoken to, and providing verbatim recitations of what the teacher and textbook said. Such a classroom is incompatible with the contemporary views of learning and motivation described in the preceding chapters. If some of your goals are for students to acquire a meaningful knowledge base, become proficient problem solvers, and learn how to work productively with others, then you have to accept the idea that these goals are best met in classrooms that are characterized by a fair amount of autonomy, physical movement, and social interaction (Emmer & Stough, 2001). And you'll be helping your students out financially if you think of classroom management in these terms. In Chapter 1 we mentioned a study (Chetty et al., 2010) in which students of above-average kindergarten teachers were estimated to have earned more money as adults than peers who were in the classrooms of below-average teachers. A large part of that benefit was due to the teachers' above-average classroom management skills. Those teachers helped students acquire such personal management skills as getting along with classmates, listening to and following directions, and focusing on a task until it's completed, which contribute to a classroom atmosphere that is productive and nonthreatening.

To help you accomplish these goals *and* keep student behavior within manageable bounds, we describe in this chapter various techniques that you can use to prevent behavior problems from occurring, and a set of techniques for dealing with misbehavior once it has occurred. In addition, we analyze the issue of school violence and bullying, summarize approaches to reducing its frequency, and note how technology has been used to encourage underachieving and disruptive students to stay in school.

LO1 Authoritarian, Permissive, and Authoritative Approaches to Classroom Management

Managing the behavior of a classroom full of students is similar to parenting a child: Some approaches are better than others at producing competent and self-regulated individuals. In investigating the relationship between parenting styles and competent children, Diana Baumrind (1971, 1991) identified three dominant styles that parents use to manage the behavior of their children: authoritarian, permissive, and authoritative. Because teachers use the same three styles, we'll briefly summarize them for you.

Authoritarian parents establish rules for their children's behavior and expect them to be blindly obeyed. Explanations of the reason for a particular rule are almost never given. Instead, rewards and punishments are given for following or not following rules. *Permissive* parents represent the other extreme. They impose few controls; they allow their children to make many basic decisions (such as what to eat, what to wear, when to go to bed) and provide advice or assistance only when asked. *Authoritative* parents provide rules but discuss the reasons for them, teach their children how to follow them, and reward children for exhibiting self-control. Authoritative parents also cede more responsibility for self-governance to their children as the children demonstrate increased self-regulation skills. This style, more so than the other two, leads to children's internalizing the parents' norms and maintaining intrinsic motivation for following them in the future.

You can probably see the parallel between Baumrind's work and classroom management. Teachers who adopt an authoritarian style are likely to have student compliance rather than autonomy as their main goal ("Do what I say because I say so") and make heavy use of rewards and punishments to produce that compliance. Teachers who adopt a permissive style are likely to rely heavily on students' identifying with and respecting them as their main approach to classroom management ("Do what I say because you like me and respect my judgment"). Teachers who adopt an authoritative style are likely to want

ripple effect The response of an entire class to a reprimand directed at only one student.

withitness An attribute of teachers who prove to their students that they know what is going on in a classroom and as a result have fewer discipline problems than teachers who lack this characteristic.

their students to learn to eventually regulate their own behavior. By explaining the rationale for classroom rules and adjusting those rules as students demonstrate the ability to govern themselves appropriately, authoritative teachers hope to convince students that adopting the teacher's norms for classroom behavior as their own will lead to the achievement of valued academic goals ("Do what I say because doing so will help you learn more"). The students of authoritative teachers better understand the need for classroom rules and tend to operate within them most of the time (J. M. T. Walker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2006).

An authoritative approach to classroom management is superior to permissive or authoritarian approaches.

Two studies support the extension of Baumrind's parenting styles to classroom teachers. In one, middle school students who described their teachers in terms that reflect the authoritative style (for example, the teacher sets clear rules and explains the penalty for breaking them, trusts students to carry out certain tasks independently, treats all students fairly, does not criticize students for not having the right answer, and has high expectations for academic achievement and behavior) scored higher on measures of motivation, prosocial behavior, and achievement than did students who described their teachers in more authoritarian terms (Wentzel, 2002).

The other study demonstrated that a teacher's decision to either support student autonomy or be more controlling of what students do in class is very much a function of the environment in which the teacher works. When teachers have curriculum decisions and performance standards for which they will be held accountable imposed on them, and when they feel that students are not highly motivated to learn, their intrinsic motivation for teaching suffers. This lowered intrinsic motivation, in turn, leads them to be less supportive of student autonomy and more controlling (Pelletier, Séguin-Lévesque, & Legault, 2002).

The next part of this chapter will describe guidelines you might follow to establish and maintain an authoritative classroom environment.

LO2 Preventing Problems: Techniques of Classroom Management

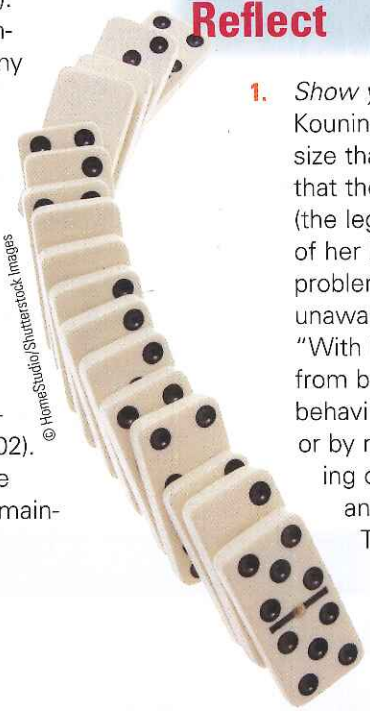
Kounin's Observations on Group Management

The modern era of research on classroom management can be said to have started with the publication of a book by Jacob Kounin titled *Discipline and Group Management in Classrooms* (1970). Kounin noticed that when he reprimanded a college student for blatantly reading a newspaper in class, the entire class responded as if the reprimand had been directed at all of them. He subsequently called this the **ripple effect**. Chances are you can recall a situation in which you were paying attention to a lesson or working on an assignment and the teacher suddenly became quite upset with the behavior of a disruptive classmate. If you felt a bit tense after the incident, you can appreciate the power of the ripple effect.

Teachers who show they are "with it" head off discipline problems.

Kounin went on to supervise a series of observational and experimental studies of student reactions to techniques of teacher control. In analyzing the results of these various studies, he came to the conclusion that the following classroom management techniques appear to be most effective:

Pause & Reflect *Would you use the ripple effect deliberately? Why or why not?*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1. *Show your students that you are "with it."* Kounin coined the term **withitness** to emphasize that teachers who prove to their students that they know what is going on in a classroom (the legendary teacher with "eyes in the back of her head") usually have fewer behavior problems than teachers who appear to be unaware of potentially disruptive behavior. "With it" teachers will prevent small problems from becoming large ones by staring at a misbehaving student with a firm facial expression or by making a quick comment about focusing on the task at hand (we describe these and other techniques later in the chapter).

   Teachers who aren't "with it," on the

other hand, either don't notice such behavior or hope that it will just disappear of its own accord.

2. *Cope with overlapping situations.* Kounin found that some teachers were better than others at addressing more than one situation at a time. One primary grade teacher, for example, was working with a reading group when she noticed two boys on the other side of the room poking each other. She abruptly got up, walked over to the boys, criticized them at length, and then returned to the reading group. By the time she returned, however, the children in the reading group had become bored and off task. Another teacher who was faced with a similar situation told a student in her reading group to continue reading aloud, and that she was listening, while she also told two nearby students to stop talking and finish their seatwork exercise.

Being able to handle overlapping activities helps maintain classroom control.

3. *Maintain smoothness and momentum in class activities.* Being a classroom teacher is a bit like being a traffic cop: Both need to keep things moving smoothly. Because teachers and students are constantly moving from one lesson to another, smooth transitions help students maintain their focus and motivation levels. Try to avoid the following sequence that Kounin observed: A teacher ends a math lesson, directs the students to take out their reading books, remembers she forgot to have the children score their math workbooks, interrupts the reading lesson, and has them take out their math workbooks again. Other impediments to instructional momentum include abruptly ending one lesson and, with little warning or preparation, starting another, and spending an inordinate amount of time commenting on such relatively trivial incidents as a student losing a pencil.

Bob Daemmrich/Bob Daemmrich Photography

Jacob Kounin found that teachers who were "with it" could deal with overlapping situations, maintained smoothness and momentum in class activities, used a variety of activities, kept the whole class involved, were decisive in handling misbehavior, and had few discipline problems.

Teachers who continually interrupt activities have discipline problems.

4. *Keep the whole class involved.* When conducting recitations or question-and-answer sessions, some teachers make the mistake of calling on students in a predictable order and in such a way that the rest of the class serves as a passive audience. As a result, some students are likely to tune out until it is their turn to respond. Here are two suggestions for keeping all students involved in a lesson:
   - Ask a question, and after pausing a few seconds to let everyone think about it, pick out someone at random to answer it.
   - When dealing with lengthy or complex material, call on several students in quick succession (and in unpredictable order) and ask each to handle one section. In a primary grade reading group, for example, have one child read a sentence; then pick someone at the other side of the group to read the next sentence, and so on.
5. *Introduce variety and be enthusiastic, particularly with younger students.* Some of the teachers Kounin observed were, to put it bluntly, dull and boring, because they followed the same procedure day after day and responded with the same, almost reflexive comments. At the other end of the scale were teachers who introduced variety, responded with enthusiasm and interest, and moved quickly to new activities when they sensed that students either had mastered a particular lesson or had reached the limits of their attention span. It seems logical to assume that students will be less inclined to sleep, daydream, or engage in disruptive activities if they are exposed to an enthusiastic teacher who varies the pace and type of classroom activities.

6. *Be decisive in handling misbehavior.* When criticizing student behavior, be clear and firm, focus on behavior rather than on personalities, and try to avoid angry outbursts. Here are some examples of how you can be decisive yet fair:
   - Identify the misbehaver and state what the unacceptable behavior is. ("Jorge! Don't flip that CD at Jamal.")
   - Specify a more constructive behavior. ("Please put the CD back in the storage box.")
   - Explain why the deviant behavior should cease. ("If the CD gets broken or dirty, no one else will be able to use it, and we'll have to try to get a new one.")
   - Be firm and authoritative and convey a no-nonsense attitude. ("All infractions of classroom rules will result in an appropriate punishment—no ifs, ands, or buts.")
   - Do not resort to anger, humiliation, or extreme punishment. Kounin concluded that extreme reactions did not seem to make children behave better. Instead, anger and severe reprimands (such as "Roger, that was an incredibly stupid thing to do. Do it again and you'll be sorry") upset them and made them feel tense and nervous. Not only is this recommendation consistent with common sense, but it is also supported by research. Students who were consistently the target of verbal abuse from teachers, such as ridicule, name-calling, shaming, yelling, and negative comparisons to other students, were more likely than students who were not treated this way to exhibit subsequent behavior problems and to achieve at lower levels (Brendgen, Wanner, Vitaro, Bukowski, & Tremblay, 2007).
   - Focus on behavior, not on personality. (Say, "Ramona, staring out the window instead of reading your textbook is unacceptable behavior in my classroom" rather than "Ramona, you're the laziest student I have ever had in class.")

Identify misbehavers and firmly specify constructive behavior.

Contemporary Studies of Classroom Management

Kounin's pioneering work, as well as the thousands of studies that followed, leave no doubt that students in classrooms (indeed, any group in any setting) require a structure to channel and guide their behavior (see, for example, Emmer & Evertson, 2009; Evertson & Emmer, 2009; Kraft, 2010; D. D. Ross, Bondy, Gallingane, & Hambacher, 2008; Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers, & Sugai, 2008). Otherwise, chaos almost always results. That being the case, teachers need to create a workable structure within which students must operate. So what, exactly, do we mean by "a workable structure"? Quite simply, a clear and not overly long set of rules and procedures that tell students what they can and cannot do in the classroom. The first part of the structure, rules, are general guidelines for behavior. "Never do anything in the classroom that could injure you or a classmate" and "Always be polite and helpful" are two examples of rules. Procedures are a bit more specific and indicate how to carry out an activity. Two examples of procedures are "To participate in class discussions, raise your hand and wait to be recognized" and "Completed homework assignments are to be placed in the wire basket on my desk as you enter the classroom."

Effective teachers plan how to handle classroom routines.

Here are a few basic ideas taken from the research cited previously that should help you and your students get off on the right foot at the beginning of the school year:

1. Formulate your rules, procedures, and activities well before the school year begins. Not only will this increase the odds that things will go smoothly, but it will let students know that you are organized and in charge.
2. Everybody from children to adults likes to know what is expected of them. So at the beginning of the year, both describe and demonstrate the kinds of behaviors that your rules and procedures embody. Explain why these rules and procedures are necessary and what the consequences will be when they are violated. Give students a written copy of the rules and procedures.
3. Start slow. For the first several days, give relatively short and uncomplicated lessons and assignments that most students can easily follow and complete. This will not only allow students to become acclimated to you and your expectations but will give them confidence that they can meet those expectations.
4. Provide clear and complete written instructions about how to carry out in-class and at-home assignments. Include the standards you will use to evaluate the assignment.

5. Give timely, frequent, and specific feedback about assignments. This will let students know what they're doing right or wrong and how they can improve their work on future assignments. Make sure the feedback is constructive and not punitive.

Managing the Middle School, Junior High, and High School Classroom

Most of the classroom management techniques and suggestions we have discussed so far are sufficiently general that they can be used in a variety of classroom settings and with primary through secondary grade students. Nevertheless, teaching preadolescents and adolescents is sufficiently different from teaching younger students that the management of the middle school, junior high, and high school classroom requires a slightly different emphasis and a few unique practices.

Classroom management has to be approached somewhat differently in the secondary grades (and in those middle schools in which students change classes several times a day) because of the segmented nature of education for these grades. Instead of being in charge of the same 25 to 30 students all day, most junior high or high school teachers (and some middle school teachers) are responsible for as many as five different groups of 25 to 30 students for about 50 minutes each. This arrangement results in more individual differences, a greater likelihood that these teachers will see a wide range of behavior problems, and a greater concern with efficient use of class time. What kinds of behavior problems can you expect at this grade level? A survey of beginning middle school and high school teachers found persistent problems with students talking, being out of their seats without permission, using cell phones and electronic games, refusing to complete assignments, and being argumentative when confronted with violations of classroom and school rules (National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality & Public Agenda, 2008a).

{ Manage behavior of adolescents by making and communicating clear rules and procedures. }

Because of the special nature of adolescence, relatively short class times, and consecutive classes with different students, teachers at the middle school, junior high, and high school levels must concentrate their efforts on preventing misbehavior. Edmund Emmer and Carolyn Evertson, in *Classroom Management for Middle and High School Teachers* (2009), discussed how teachers can accomplish this goal by carefully organizing the classroom environment, establishing clear rules and procedures, and delivering effective instruction.

According to Emmer and Evertson, the physical features of the classroom should be arranged to optimize teaching and learning. They suggest an environment in which (1) the arrangement of the seating, materials, and equipment is consistent with the kinds of instructional activities the teacher favors; (2) high-traffic areas, such as the teacher's desk and the pencil sharpener, are kept free of congestion; (3) the teacher can easily see all students; (4) frequently used teaching materials and student supplies are readily available; and (5) students can easily see instructional presentations and displays.

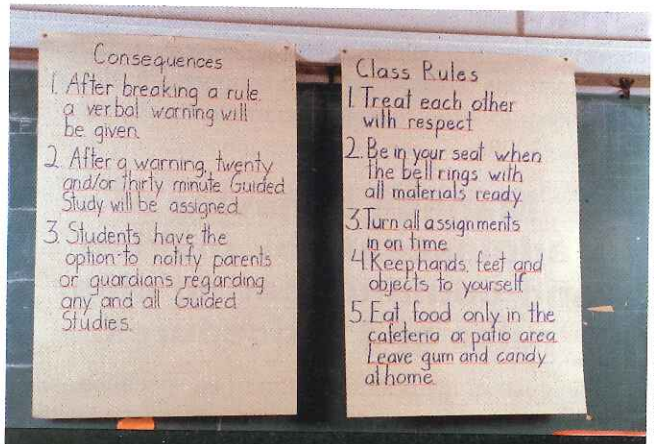
Emmer and Evertson also suggested that classroom rules be specifically stated, discussed with

TeachSource Video Case

Elementary Classroom Management: Basic Stratgies

Go to the Education CourseMate website and watch the video, study the artifacts in the case, and reflect upon the following questions:

1. Would you describe Ms. Moylan's classroom management style as authoritarian, permissive, or authoritative? Provide specific examples from the Video Case to support your answer.
2. What elements of the well-managed classroom do you see in this Video Case?



Because middle school, junior high, and high school students move from one teacher to another every 50 minutes or so, it is important to establish a common set of rules that govern various activities and procedures and to clearly communicate the reasons for those rules.

students on the first day of class, and—for seventh, eighth, and ninth grades—posted in a prominent place. Sophomores, juniors, and seniors should be given a handout on which the rules are listed. A set of five to eight basic rules should be sufficient.

The Suggestions for Teaching should help you put into practice the ideas presented in the first part of this chapter.

LO3 Techniques for Dealing With Behavior Problems

If you follow the procedures we have discussed, you should be able to establish a well-managed classroom. Even if you do everything possible to prevent problems from developing, however, you are still likely to have to deal with the relatively minor disruptions of an individual student or two. This section discusses how to deal with violations of the classroom rules that you have established. More broad-based interventions that attempt to reduce the frequency of more serious problems, such as physical and verbal violence between students, and that involve entire classrooms or the entire school, are discussed in a later section.

Influence Techniques

In *Mental Hygiene in Teaching* (1959), Fritz Redl and William Wattenberg describe a list of behavior management interventions called *influence techniques*. Don't be put off by the fact that this book is now over 50 years old; its timeless value is illustrated by the fact that a recent book on classroom management (*Behavior Management: A Practical Approach for Educators*, 2007, by James Walker, Thomas Shea, and Anne Bauer) and a journal article (Kraft, 2010) recommend using some of the very same techniques.

Planned Ignoring As we pointed out in our discussion of operant conditioning (Chapter 7), you might be able to extinguish inappropriate attention-seeking behaviors by merely ignoring them. Such behaviors include finger snapping, body movements, book dropping, hand waving, and whistling. If you intend to use the planned-ignoring technique, make sure the student is aware that he is engaging in the inappropriate behavior. This technique should not be used if the behavior in question is interfering with other students' efforts.

TeachSource Video Case

Secondary Classroom Management: Basic Strategies

Go to the Education CourseMate website and watch the video, study the artifacts in the case, and reflect upon the following questions:

1. How does Mr. Turner achieve successful classroom management with his high school students? What specific strategies from the textbook do you see in action?
2. Examine the arrangement of Mr. Turner's secondary-level classroom (e.g., arrangement of student desks, location of equipment, etc.). How do these factors influence his management of the classroom?

Suggestions for Teaching

Techniques of Classroom Management

1 Show you are confident and prepared the first day of class.

The first few minutes with any class are often crucial. Your students will be sizing you up, especially if they know you are a new teacher. If you act scared and unsure of yourself, some students may think they'll be able to engage in more off-task behavior than is the case in other teachers' classes. One way to demonstrate your confidence is to tell your students a little bit about yourself and your goals. You might, for example, explain why you chose teaching as a career, describe any teaching-related experiences you have had, note that your most successful experiences were ones in which you were able to establish a productive working relationship with that group of students, and then say that you expect this class to not only accomplish great things but to enjoy the process as well.

2 Know how you will handle the activities and routines that are a part of the everyday life of classrooms.

A large part of effective classroom management is preparation. Deciding before the school year begins how you will handle such details as taking attendance, assigning desks, handing out books and materials, permitting students to go to the restroom, and so forth has several benefits. For one, you are more likely to handle these tasks more efficiently than if you make decisions on the fly. This will help you accomplish everything you need to accomplish during those first few days. Another benefit is that your students will come to see you as someone who can be trusted and relied on.

3 Explain the reasons for your rules and procedures.

Many teachers, even veterans, fail to explain to their students why they make the decisions they do, and then wonder why students appear confused, frustrated, and lacking in motivation. We mentioned earlier, for example, that many teachers don't bother to explain why a new topic or skill is important for students to learn. Don't make that mistake with your rules and procedures. When students understand why you want things done in a certain way and that your decisions are not unreasonable, they will be more willing to follow them.

Examples

- "During class discussion, please don't speak out unless you raise your hand and are recognized. I want to be able to hear what each person has to say, and I won't be able to do that if more than one person is talking."
- "During work periods, I don't mind if you talk a bit to your neighbors. But if you do it too much and disturb others, I'll have to ask you to stop."
- "If you come in late, go to your desk by walking along the side and back of the room. It's disruptive—and not very polite—to walk between people who are interacting with each other."

4 Begin classwork the first day with an instructional activity that is clearly stated and can be completed quickly and successfully.

For the first day or two, use short lessons that students will easily be able to comprehend and short tasks they can complete successfully. Clearly specify what is to be done, and state the conditions and criteria for determining successful completion. In addition, mention an activity (such as examining the assigned text) that students should engage in after they have completed the assignment. In the elementary grades, you might give a short assignment that helps students review material covered in the preceding grade.

Examples

- "To help us get to know one another better, I would like you to write a one-page description of yourself that you will read to the class. Tell us your name, what kinds of things you like and don't like to do, what you're good at, and what you would like to be better at." (For primary grade students, oral presentations may be easier than writing.)
- "Last year in English you read the novel *Silas Marner.* One of the novels you will read this year is *Great Expectations.* Since both novels are set in England during the early part of the 1800s, I thought it would be helpful to have you recall what you learned about England from *Silas Marner.* Then we can compare that with your impressions of England from *Great Expectations.*"
- "We will be doing a lot of writing in this class throughout the year. To give you some practice and to familiarize you with my grading standards, I will pass out a brief reading passage about recent developments in alternative energy. You will have a half hour to read the passage and write a brief summary of its main points. Since this is just for practice, the score will not count toward your final grade."

5 During the first week or so with a new group of students, have them spend most of their time engaging in whole-class activities under your direction.

Teachers who are good classroom managers know that you can't expect students to adjust to the routines of a new teacher and classroom in just a few days. Instructional tactics like group discussions, cooperative learning arrangements, and individual research projects usually work out more successfully when the participants have a degree of familiarity with one another and the material they will be studying. At first, stick to relatively simple whole-class activities like the examples in the previous suggestion.

6 Be professional but pleasant, and try to establish a businesslike but supportive classroom atmosphere.

Teachers who establish a businesslike and professional atmosphere, but do so in a pleasant and supportive way, have been referred to as warm demanders (Ross, Bondy, Gallingane, & Hambacher, 2008). Warm demanders insist that students meet their expectations, treat the teacher with respect, treat classmates with respect, put forth an honest effort to learn, and encourage their classmates to do the same. They do this by making sure their students understand and practice expected behaviors, providing both positive and negative examples of expected behavior, repeating a request until the student complies, reminding students of expected behaviors, reinforcing expected behaviors, and, when necessary, using negative consequences.

Examples

- "At the beginning of class you may speak quietly to your classmates, but when I start a lesson, all eyes are on me and all talking stops."
- "Jacob, please show everyone the proper way to line up to go out for recess."
- "When someone gives a wrong answer to a question, do we laugh at him or her? No! We remind ourselves that school is where we come to learn and that making mistakes is a normal part of learning."
- "Eduardo, thank you for helping Sonia finish the assignment on time. That is exactly what I mean when I say we should help one another do our best."

The following example illustrates this technique:

- Carl has recently gotten into the habit of tapping his pencil on his desk as he works on an assignment, as a way to engage you in a conversation that is unrelated to the work. The next several times Carl does this, do not look at him or comment on his behavior.

Signals In some cases, a subtle signal can put an end to budding misbehavior. The signal, if successful, will stimulate the student to control herself. (Note, however, that this technique should not be used too often and that it is effective only in the early stages of misbehavior.) Possible signals include:

- Clearing your throat.
- Staring at the offender.
- Stopping what you are saying in midsentence and staring.
- Shaking your head (to indicate no).
- Saying, "Someone is making it hard for the rest of us to concentrate" (or the equivalent).

Proximity and Touch Control Place yourself close to the misbehaving student. This makes a signal a bit more apparent, as in the following examples:

- Walk over and stand near the student.
- With an elementary grade student, it sometimes helps if you place a gentle hand on a shoulder or arm.

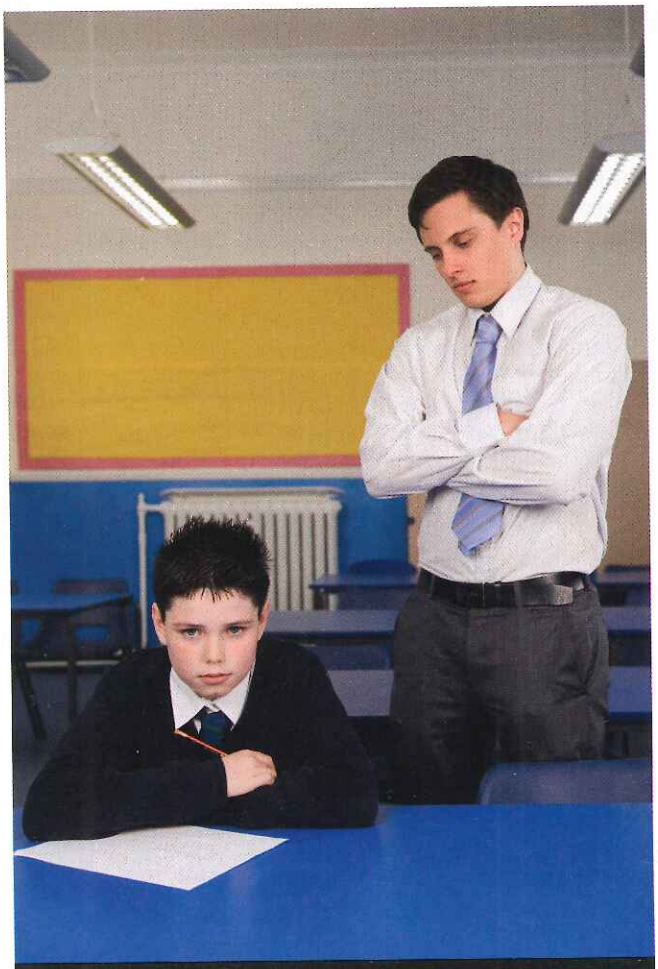
Interest Boosting If the student seems to be losing interest in a lesson or assignment, pay some additional attention to the student and the student's work. Some easy methods are:

- Ask the student a question, preferably related to what is being discussed. (Questions such as "Ariel, are you paying attention?" or "Don't you agree, Ariel?" invite wisecracks. *Genuine* questions are preferable.)
- Go over and examine some work the student is doing. It often helps if you point out something good about it and urge continued effort.

Humor Humor is an excellent all-around influence technique, especially in tense situations. However, remember that it should be *good*-humored humor—gentle and benign rather than derisive. Avoid irony and sarcasm. For instance:

- "Shawn, you've been to the pencil sharpener so often today I'm beginning to think that the two of you are best friends. But even best friends need a rest from one another."

Perhaps you have heard someone say, "We're not laughing at you; we're laughing *with* you." Before you say this to one of your students, you might take note that one second grader who was treated to that comment unhinged the teacher by replying, "I'm not laughing."



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Signals such as staring at a misbehaving student and putting a finger to your lips are examples of the influence techniques suggested by Redl and Wattenberg.

Helping Over Hurdles Some misbehavior undoubtedly occurs because students are confused about what they need to do or lack the ability to carry out an assignment. Try to remove the confusion for them:

- Make sure your directions are clear and complete.
- Arrange for students to have something to do at appropriate levels of difficulty.
- Let more advanced students help those who are having trouble.

Program Restructuring At the beginning of this book, we noted that teaching is partially an art because lessons do not always proceed as planned and must occasionally be changed in midstream. The essence of this program restructuring technique is to recognize when

a lesson or activity is going poorly and to try something else:

- "Well, class, I can see that many of you are bored with this discussion of the pros and cons of congressional term limits. Let's turn it into a class debate instead, with the winning team getting 50 points toward its final grade."
- "I had hoped to complete this math unit before the Christmas break, but I can see that most of you are too excited to give it your best effort. Since today is the last day before the break, I'll postpone the lesson until school resumes in January. Let's do an art project instead."

Antiseptic Bouncing Sometimes a student will get carried away by restlessness, uncontrollable giggling, or the like. If you feel that this is nonmalicious behavior and due simply to lack of self-control, ask the student to leave the room. (You may have recognized that antiseptic bouncing is virtually identical to the *time-out* procedure described by behavior modification enthusiasts.) Be sure to let the student know what behavior change will allow her or him to rejoin the class:

- "Nancy, please move to the desk at the back of the room until you are ready to take part in our reading lesson. Raise you hand when you want to return to your own desk."
- "Randall, take your math book and report to Mr. Franklin's study room for at least the next 15 minutes. Then come back if you think you can control yourself."

Give criticism privately, then offer encouragement.

Criticism and Encouragement Whenever you have to criticize a particular student, do so in private if possible. When public criticism is the only possibility, do your best to avoid ridiculing or humiliating the student. Such treatment may contribute to negative attitudes toward you and decreased motivation to learn. Because of the ripple effect, it may also have a negative impact on innocent students. One way to minimize the negative aftereffects of criticism is to tack on some encouragement in the form of a suggestion as to how the misbehavior can be replaced by more positive behavior:

- If a student doesn't take subtle hints (such as stares), you might say, "LeVar, you're disturbing the class. We all need to concentrate on this."
- Act completely flabbergasted, as though the misbehavior seems so inappropriate that you can't comprehend it. A kindergarten teacher used this technique to perfection. She would say, "Adam! Is that you?" (Adam just shoved Lucy away from the toy he was playing with.) "I can't believe my eyes. I wonder if you would help me over here." Obviously, this gambit can't be used too often, and the language and degree of exaggeration have to be altered a bit for older students. But indicating that you expect good behavior and providing an immediate opportunity for the misbehaving student to substitute an appropriate behavior can be a useful technique.

Defining Limits In learning about rules and regulations, children go through a process of testing the limits. Two-year-olds particularly, when they have learned how to walk and talk and manipulate things, feel the urge to assert their independence. In addition, they need to find out exactly what the house rules are. (Does Daddy *really* mean it when he says, "Don't take the pots out of the cupboard"? Does Mommy *really* mean it when she says, "Don't play with that hammer"?) Older children do the same thing, especially with new teachers and in new situations. The technique of defining limits includes not only establishing rules (as noted earlier) but also enforcing them:

- Establish class rules, with or without the assistance of students, and make sure the rules are understood.
- When someone tests the rules, show that they are genuine and that there *are* limits.

Postsituational Follow-Up Classroom discipline occasionally has to be applied in a tense, emotion-packed atmosphere. When this happens, it often helps to have a postsituational discussion—in private if an individual is involved, with the whole class if it was a group-wide situation, as the following examples show:

- In a private conference, you can say, "Leila, I'm sorry I had to ask you to leave the room, but you were getting kind of carried away."
- Addressing the group is similar: "Well, everybody, things got a bit wild during those group work sessions. I want you to enjoy yourselves, but we practically had a riot going, didn't we? And that's why I had to ask you to stop. Let's try to hold it down to a dull roar tomorrow."

Some practical suggestions for handling problem behavior appear in the Suggestions for Teaching on the next page.

Suggestions for Teaching

Handling Problem Behavior

1 Have a variety of influence techniques planned in advance.

Have you ever heard or read the phrase "forewarned is forearmed"? Applied to this chapter, it means if you know that classroom misbehavior occurs unexpectedly and often demands an immediate and effective solution, it's best to have some idea of how to respond. Instinctive reactions like getting overly angry and hurling insults may give you some satisfaction and produce short-term relief, but they are likely to be ineffective in the long run. We suggest that you make a list of the techniques mentioned in the preceding sections and think about how you might apply them when a particular problem arises.

2 Be prompt, consistent, and reasonable.

No attempt to control behavior will be effective if it is remote from the act that provokes it. If a student is to comprehend the relationship between his or her behavior and your response, one must quickly follow the other. Don't postpone dealing with misbehaving students or make vague threats to be put into effect sometime in the future (such as not permitting the students to attend an end-of-the-year event). By that time, most students will have forgotten what they did wrong.

Being consistent about classroom control can save a lot of time, energy, and misery. Strictness one day and leniency the next, or roughness on one student and gentleness with another, confuses students and prompts them to test you just to see whether this is a good day or a bad day, or whether they can get away with something more frequently than others do.

Overly harsh penalties for misbehavior do little more than generate fear and anxiety in students and undercut your ability to motivate them to work productively. While beating them into submission, so to speak, may reduce the frequency of disruptive behavior, it usually comes at the cost of respect for you. Research shows that higher-level thinking and learning is much more likely to occur among students who trust their teacher to be accepting and fair (Mahwinney & Sagan, 2007).

3 Avoid empty threats.

If at all possible, avoid a showdown in front of the class. In a confrontation before the whole group, you are likely to get desperate. You may start out with a "Yes, you will"—"No, I won't" sort of duel and end up making a threat on the spur of the moment. Frequently, you will not be able to make good on the threat, and you will lose face. It's far safer and better for everyone to settle extreme differences in private.

4 Whenever you have to deal harshly with a student, make an effort to clear the air and reestablish a positive relationship.

In all likelihood, a student who has been severely reprimanded or punished will not come to you and apologize. You should take the lead and set up a confidential conference with the student as soon as possible. Otherwise, she could become your enemy for the rest of the year. Explain that the incident is in the past as far as you are concerned, but don't be surprised or disappointed if the student does not respond with signs or words of gratitude. It's hard for anybody, particularly students, to admit that they were wrong. One way to demonstrate that you have indeed put the incident in the past is to praise the student for some positive action shortly after the punishment.

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Teachers who excel at classroom management have at their disposal a variety of influence techniques that they consistently and immediately apply to prevent or deal with misbehavior. In each case, they use a technique that is appropriate to the severity of the misbehavior.

5 Follow the advice of a master teacher.

Margaret Metzger is a veteran high school English teacher whose sensible and practical views on modeling and clearly communicating one's goals to students were mentioned in Chapter 9. She has also written, in the form of an open letter to new teachers, an insightful and compelling distillation of her experiences in learning the art of classroom management (Metzger, 2002). Metzger's recommendations for managing the behavior of adolescents also illustrate a point we have made in previous chapters: Successful teachers formulate practices that are consistent with, if not inspired by, research-based findings. Although we offer a summary of Metzger's recommendations, this is an article we urge you to read in its entirety and refer

LO4 Violence in American Schools

How Safe Are Our Schools?

You have probably read or heard reports about the frequency of crime in the United States, particularly among juveniles. According to figures compiled by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (Puzzanchera, 2009), a little over 97,000 juveniles (any individual below the age of 18) were arrested in 2007 for committing violent crimes. While that figure seems large, it represents only about 16% of all juveniles. The good news about this figure is that it represents a 14% decline over the previous decade from the 1998 figure of 113,000.

Because the kinds of behaviors that occur in schools tend to reflect trends in society at large, it is natural that a certain amount of violent behavior occurs on school grounds and during school hours. However, schools are still relatively safe places (see M. J. Mayer

to repeatedly during your first few years of teaching.

Metzger (2002) divided her suggestions into two lists: "simple principles of survival," created during her early years of teaching, and "more complex principles," which grew out of her experiences during her middle teaching years. Here, in summary form, are both lists.

Simple Principles of Survival

1. *Use a light touch.* Don't immediately resort to a highly aversive technique to control students' behavior. Instead, try such simpler methods as whispering instead of yelling, using humorous statements, changing locations, talking to students privately, calling students by name, smiling a lot, and ignoring some infractions.
2. *Let students save face.* Instead of describing a student's misbehavior and issuing a reprimand, which takes time and interrupts the flow of a lesson, indicate that you've noticed the misbehavior and use such quick and somewhat humorous phrases as "It's a good thing I like you," "Here's the deal: I'll pretend I didn't see that, and you never do it again," "Consider yourself scolded," "Am I driving you over the edge?" and "That's inappropriate."
3. *Insist on the right to sanity.* To avoid becoming a burnout candidate, don't try to address all misbehaviors. Instead, make a list of possible classroom infractions and rank them. Decide which behaviors have to be addressed immediately, which can wait until some later time, and which can be ignored. Metzger, for example, decided to ignore when students came late to class. She was often so busy trying to get the class under way (returning papers, talking with students about makeup work) that she wasn't in a position to notice who arrived late.
4. *Get help.* Learn who among the school staff (administrators, guidance counselors, truant officer, other teachers) are able and willing to help you solve certain discipline problems.
5. *Get out of the limelight.* This is Metzger's way of saying that you shouldn't feel as if you have to actively lead the class all period, every period. Learn to make appropriate use of student presentations, seatwork, movies, and group work.

More Complex Principles

1. *Ask questions.* Teachers often assume, incorrectly, that they have all the information they need to understand why one or more students misbehaved. Rather than make this assumption, take the time to ask students for an explanation. As Metzger said, "Sometimes you feel you have already spent too much time on the disruptive students. Frankly, you don't want to talk to them. Too bad. Do it" (2002, p. 80). Administrators, other teachers, and the students' parents can also be useful sources of information.
2. *Give adult feedback.* If students are engaging in behaviors that you find disruptive or that indicate a serious underlying problem, don't mince words. Tell them directly. Here are two examples offered by Metzger:
   - "Your posture, your mumbling under your breath, and your tardiness all show disrespect. If you hate this class, you should talk to me about it. If you like this class, you should know that you are giving misleading signals." (p. 80)
   - "You have complained about everything we have done for the past two months. I now see you as a constant whiner. You probably don't want to give this impression, and it's getting on my nerves. So for the next two months, let's have a moratorium on complaining. You can start whining again in January. Does this seem fair?" (p. 80)
3. *Respect the rights of the whole class.* Try to remember that most of your students follow the rules and are just as deserving of your attention as those who do not.
4. *Ask students to do more.* This echoes a suggestion we have made several times in earlier chapters. Often the best-behaved classes are those in which the work is interesting, relevant to students' lives, and challenging.
5. *Bypass or solve perennial problems.* There will always be students who forget to bring a pencil or book to class. Rather than erupt every time this problem arises, take steps to eliminate it. For several dollars a year, you can buy a supply of pencils and allow students to borrow one for class. For students who forget to bring their books, you can keep a few extra copies on hand. To ensure that students return at the end of class what they have borrowed, you may need to require that they leave with you something that they will not leave the classroom without, such as a shoe or a watch.

Metzger ends her article with a copy of a 25-point memo that she gives to all students at the beginning of each semester and that reflects her philosophy of classroom management. Read it. You'll be glad you did.

Incidents of crime and serious violence occur relatively infrequently in public schools and have been decreasing in recent years.

& Furlong, 2010, for an excellent discussion of school violence statistics and what they mean). One basis for that claim is that the most common types of school-based conflicts fall into a few time-honored categories: verbal harassment (name calling, insulting, teasing), verbal arguments, and physical fights (hitting, kicking, scratching, and pushing). Most of the fights do not involve serious injury or violations of law (Dinkes, Kemp, Baum, & Snyder, 2009). Second, a recent government report found relatively low levels of school-based violence and crime (Dinkes, Kemp, Baum, & Snyder, 2009). Here are the main findings from that report:

bullying A situation in which one person has more power than another and repeatedly abuses that power for his or her own benefit.

- From July 1, 2005, through June 30, 2006, 14 school-age students (ages 5 through 19) were murdered at school. This translates to less than one homicide per million students for that 1-year period.
- In 2005, there were 136,500 serious violent crimes (rape, sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault) committed against students between the ages of 12 and 18. This figure translates to 5 serious violent crimes per 100,000 students. Ten years earlier the corresponding figures were considerably higher (222,500 serious crimes; 9 per 100,000 students).
- In 2005, 8% of high school students were threatened or injured with a weapon within a 12-month period.
- Six percent of students ages 12 through 18 reported avoiding school activities or one or more places at school because they feared for their own safety in 2005.
- The percentage of teachers threatened with injury by a student decreased from 12% during the 1993–1994 school year to 7% during the 2003–2004 school year. The percentage of teachers who were physically attacked decreased from 4% during 1993–1994 to 3% during 2003–2004. The percentage of elementary grade teachers who were attacked was twice as great as the percentage of secondary grade teachers (4% versus 2%, respectively).

These findings suggest that overall crime rates in schools are decreasing, students feel increasingly safe at school, and most teachers and students are likely to be physically safe in their own classrooms and school buildings. Nevertheless, school violence can occur in any school and at any time. One form of school violence that has gotten considerable attention, and for good reason, is bullying.

The Problem of Bullying

Although **bullying** has existed for as long as there have been schools, it is now recognized as a significant part of the school violence problem. Numerous studies have been conducted and scores of books have been written about various aspects of bullying. In this section, we will take a brief look at what bullying is and how often it occurs, what characterizes a bully, what effects bullying has on its victims, and how schools can reduce bullying and its negative effects.

What Bullying Is Bullying can be defined as "the repeated (not just once) harming of another through words or physical attack on the school grounds or on the way to or from school" (Devine & Cohen, 2007, p. 64). A similar definition calls it "the systematic abuse of power in interpersonal relationships" (Rigby, 2008, p. 22). In essence, bullying is a situation in which one person has more power than another and repeatedly abuses that power for his or her own benefit.

Some of the findings on bullying might surprise you. Although it occurs all too frequently, it is not the runaway problem that some might think, given the coverage it gets in the media. During the 2005–2006 school year, 28% of 12- to 18-year-olds reported having been bullied at least once. More girls than boys engage in bullying when you look at all of its forms. Girls are more likely than boys to use name calling and insults, start

TeachSource Video Case

Classroom Management: Best Practices

Go to the Education CourseMate website and watch the video, study the artifacts in the case, and reflect upon the following questions:

1. Can you give an example of "withitness" from this Video Case?
2. In this Video Case, several teachers provide their philosophies of and approaches to classroom management. Which statements align most closely with your own philosophies of classroom management? Are there any that you disagree with? Explain your answers.

and repeat rumors, and destroy property. The bullying behavior of boys, on the other hand, is more likely to take such physical forms as pushing, shoving, tripping, or spitting on someone else and trying to make someone else do things they do not want to do. Another aspect of bullying that surprises many people is that it occurs more frequently in middle school than in high school, and as students move from grade to grade a decrease in the rate of bullying usually occurs (Dinkes, Kemp, Baum, & Snyder, 2009).

Boys and girls favor different forms of bullying.

Although bullying often involves face-to-face encounters, it does not always take that form because of the prevalence of social networking websites. This form of bullying, in which one or more students post malicious statements about another student, is referred to as **cyberbullying**. Given the different styles of bullying behavior shown by boys and girls, it will probably not surprise you to learn that more than twice as many girls as boys engage in cyberbullying (5.3% versus 2.0% for the 2006–2007 school year) (Dinkes, Kemp, Baum, & Snyder, 2009).

There are some characteristics of cyberbullying that make it different from face-to-face bullying. First, it is anonymous. Those who use social networking websites such as Facebook and MySpace to bully others are known online only by their fictitious screen names. Second, because the Internet is designed to allow social exchanges among people anywhere in the world, the number of people who bully one or more others online, and the number of people who passively watch, can be quite large. It would not be unusual for virtually all students in a school to be aware of another student's embarrassing behavior and for many to tease the student about it. Third, the bullying can be constant. Threatening, insulting, or teasing e-mail messages can bombard a target student all day, every day. Unless taken down, website postings are constantly available for everyone to see (Shariff, 2008).

Characteristics of Bullies How are students who bully different from other students? They're different in terms of internal characteristics, their relationships with teachers and classmates, and the quality of their home life.

cyberbullying
Bullying on social networks in which one or more students post malicious statements about another student.

- Students who engage in bullying behavior are more likely than their nonbullying peers to exhibit aggressive-impulsive behavior. They are often described by their teachers as being hyperactive, disruptive, likely to act without thinking of the consequences, and inclined to respond aggressively when provoked by peers (O'Brennan, Bradshaw, & Sawyer, 2008).
- Students who engage in bullying report getting less support from their classmates and teachers. That is, they are less likely than other students to feel there is someone at school, either a friend or a teacher, whom they can talk to about their problems (Flaspohler, Elfstrom, Vanderzee, & Sink, 2009).
- Children who engage in bullying are more likely to have witnessed domestic violence and are less likely to have a close relationship with their mother than their peers who do not bully others (Bowes et al., 2009).

How Bullying Affects Its Victims Being a victim of bullying can produce any one or more of the following negative effects (Beran, 2009; Graham, 2010; O'Brennan, Bradshaw, & Sawyer, 2008; Rigby, 2008):

- Staying home from school.
- Avoiding certain places at school.
- Asking to transfer to another school.
- Lower grades due to difficulty concentrating on schoolwork (particularly if the victim believes he or she is not being supported by parents or teachers).
- Feelings of depression, anxiety, and insecurity that produce physical ailments.
- Social isolation.

How Schools Can Address Bullying There are two ways that educators can deal with the problem of bullying. One is to implement school-wide programs to reduce its frequency. These can take many forms, such as teaching students who witness such incidents to immediately report them or to intervene; promoting rules that discourage discrimination; using videos, speakers, and discussions to make students aware of the feelings of bullies and their victims; and teaching those who bully more appropriate forms of social interaction (Flaspohler, Elfstrom, Vanderzee, & Sink, 2009; Hazler & Carney, 2006; C. T. Morrison, 2008). An obvious question to ask here is whether these programs work. The answer is that many do, but their effect—less reported bullying—is likely to be modest (Merrell, Gueldner, Ross, & Isava, 2008). Keep in mind that bullying is a complex phenomenon that is caused and supported by several variables. Changing this type of behavior requires persistent effort.

The other approach is for individual teachers to establish a classroom atmosphere that buffers bullying victims from its negative effects. Research (e.g., Flaspohler, Elfstrom, Vanderzee, & Sink, 2009; Meyer-Adams & Conner, 2008) has shown, for example, that students who feel valued and accepted by both their classmates and their teacher are less likely to demonstrate the negative effects of bullying than peers who do not believe they have that kind of social support.

School violence is related to biological, cultural, academic, cognitive, and environmental factors.

Analyzing Reasons for Violence

School violence is a multifaceted phenomenon. That's a fancy way of saying that it has many possible causes. We say "possible causes" because proving that a given factor is a direct cause of violence is very difficult. Often the best that can be done is to state that a strong relationship exists between one or more factors and school violence. With that in mind, what follows are some of the major factors that are related to violent behavior and are thought to be at least a partial cause of its occurrence. Also, note that since boys commit most of the violence (Bloomquist & Schnell, 2002; Connor, 2002; Englander, 2007), the research findings are often broken down by gender.

- Boys have overactive behavioral activation systems, and underactive behavioral inhibition systems (both are located in the frontal lobes of the brain) (Bloomquist & Schnell, 2002; Connor, 2002).
- Aggressive boys have higher levels of testosterone and a higher tolerance for pain (Bloomquist & Schnell, 2002; Connor, 2002).
- Socialization patterns are different for boys and girls. Boys are encouraged to assert their independence and be aggressive; girls are encouraged to be dependent and cooperative (Englander, 2007; Lancey, 2002).
- Boys tend to become more frustrated with and hostile toward school because they experience academic failure more frequently than girls (Dinkes, Kemp, Baum, & Snyder, 2007).
- Aggressive individuals are more likely than others to misinterpret another person's actions or facial expressions as hostile and to respond in kind (Guerra & Leidy, 2008).
- Students who are deficient in the interpersonal problem-solving skills of *means–ends thinking* and *alternative–solution thinking* are more likely than others to show an inability to delay gratification, to have difficulty making friends, to have emotional blowups when frustrated, to show less sympathy to others in distress, and to exhibit verbal and physical aggression (Jimerson, Morrison, Pletcher, & Furlong, 2006; Shure, 1999).
- Higher levels of student violence have been associated with schools that are too large, impersonal, and competitive; that do not enforce rules fairly or consistently; that use punitive ways of resolving conflict; and that impose an unimaginative, nonmeaningful curriculum on students (Bloomquist & Schnell, 2002; Guerra & Leidy, 2008; Lowry, Sleet, Duncan, Powell, & Kolbe, 1995).

Pause & Reflect *Do you agree with the argument that school violence can be caused by a nonmeaningful, unimaginative curriculum and an impersonal school environment? If so, what can you do to make the subjects you teach lively, interesting, and useful? What ideas for making your school a more welcoming and pleasant place for students can you share with colleagues and administrators?*

Programs to reduce school violence and misbehavior abound. Some are designed to be used by individual teachers in their classrooms, and some are intended for school-wide implementation. By and large, these programs are quite effective. When the results from 99 studies were analyzed as a group, researchers found decreases in disruptive classroom behavior for 78% of the students (Stage & Quiroz, 1997). To give you a sense of what these programs are like, we describe one of each type in the following section.

LO5 Reducing School Violence, Bullying, and Misbehavior

Classroom Interventions

Because most teachers work with two dozen or more students, some of whom have disabilities, and typically have no assistance, classroom interventions that are designed to prevent misbehavior and keep small disruptions from escalating into serious problems need to be both effective and easy to implement. One such intervention, which has been shown to work with mainstreamed students with behavior disorders as well as with regular students, is called the Good Behavior Game. It is based on the idea that the behavior of a group determines whether positive reinforcement is given.

The reinforcement contingency used in the Good Behavior Game is called interdependent group contingency because it allows all students in a group or in the entire class to receive reinforcement as long as the group's performance meets or exceeds some specified level of performance, such as an average grade on a homework assignment or a maximum number of classroom rule violations. The advantage of this system is that all students must participate and make a contribution, but the group is not automatically denied reinforcement if a small number of students do not perform as well as the others. The Good Behavior Game was designed to prevent or reduce such highly disruptive behaviors as verbal and physical aggression, but it has also been used to moderate out-of-seat behavior, excessive talking, and low levels of classroom participation (Tingstrom, Sterling-Turner, & Wilczynski, 2006).

Classroom disruptions can be significantly reduced by an approach based on operant conditioning.

There are, of course, many other effective classroom-wide approaches to managing student behavior that space limitations do not allow us to discuss. Aside from the Good Behavior Game, we suggest you also read about Judicious Discipline (Landau & Gathercoal, 2000), Classroom Check-Up (Reinke, Lewis-Palmer, & Merrell, 2008), and positive peer reporting (J. Q. Morrison & Jones, 2007). Note the emphasis on praising desired student behavior in most of these programs. This chapter's Case in Print describes a successful school-wide program that is also based on the idea of rewarding students for following school and classroom rules.

© Richard Hutchings/Photo Edit

Some experts on school violence argue that impersonal and punitively oriented schools produce higher-than-average levels of school violence.

School-Wide Programs to Reduce Violence and Improve Discipline

Although classroom interventions such as the ones described in the previous section can make life less threatening and more enjoyable for individual teachers and their students, they do not address disruptive behavior elsewhere in a school, and they may conflict with other teachers' procedures. Consequently, some educators have designed violence-reduction programs that can be implemented throughout an entire school. This section describes a popular program called Resolving Conflict Creatively. Two other programs that are worth investigating are Unified Discipline and Smart and Good High Schools. An analysis of research on 74 school-based violence-reduction programs (Derzon, 2006) found that most produced reductions in criminal behavior, suspensions from school, and physical violence.

Resolving Conflict Creatively Program A somewhat different approach to decreasing physical violence, particularly between students, is the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP), created by Linda Lantieri in 1985. The goal of the program is to teach students how to use nonviolent conflict resolution techniques in place of their more normal and more violent methods. Students are trained by teachers to monitor the school environment (such as the playground, the cafeteria, and the hallways) for imminent or actual physical

Case in Print

Catch 'Em Being Good

Although classroom interventions . . . can make life less threatening and more enjoyable for individual teachers and their students, they do not address disruptive behavior elsewhere in a school, and they may conflict with other teachers' procedures. Consequently, some educators have designed violence-reduction programs that can be implemented throughout an entire school. (p. 275)

To Teach Good Behavior, Schools Try More Carrots and Fewer Sticks

VALERIE SCHREMP HAHN

St. Louis Dispatch, 12/18/08

If you were a student at Halls Ferry Elementary School in Florissant, you'd know that when soft music comes on in the cafeteria, it's time to finish eating. If your teacher asked you to "slant," you'd know the acronym means to sit up straight and get ready to listen.

And if you were new here, and needed a primer on all the school's rules and procedures—and there are lots of them—you'd be invited to join the Newcomer's Club.

"I just think that's so good for kids, to come into an environment and know what is expected of them," said Lisa Hazel, principal of Halls Ferry, in the Ferguson-Florissant School District.

All schools have rules; just try keeping 500 children in line without them.

But schools like Halls Ferry have rules nailed down to a science. Administrators say they are using rules not just to keep order, but also to set kids up to succeed.

The schools practice PBS, or Positive Behavior Support. It's sometimes called PBIS, or Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports.

Ask any of these schools to show you their rules and regulations binder, and you'll see procedures and lesson plans for everything.

Everything. How to line up in the cafeteria. How to use "nice hands and feet" on the bus. How to be kind to classmates.

But the program isn't about creating endless lists of rules and cracking down on violators. Instead, the focus is on setting expectations and catching students being good. In other words, schools are offering more carrots and fewer sticks.

Hazel said the approach makes her job easier—about half as many students were sent to her office last school year as the year before.

Positive Behavior Support is in schools in all 50 states. Halls Ferry was one of the first local schools to start it 10 years ago.

Hazelwood, University City, Clayton, Pattonville, Kirkwood, and Webster Groves are among area districts that have signed on more of their schools in the past few years.

The approach is not rigid; it evolves with the needs of a school. But there is consistency within individual schools.

"Everyone in the school uses the same words," says Thurma DeLoach, director of Kirkwood's special programs. "It's not like when I was in school, where in one classroom these were the expectations; in another classroom, you can get away with murder."

Teachers set up their own classroom rules and procedures, but they reflect the school's general philosophy and are similar to those in other classrooms in the same grade level.

The program is based on the theory that about three-fourths of students in the school don't have behavior issues. About a fourth of students might need some help, which could mean they get a mentor or an invitation to attend a school "social skills club." A small percentage of students have chronic issues and need more help; they're likely to be put on behavior plans.

When schools decide to adopt the program, they might start small with a problem that their school can work on, like cafeteria behavior. Teachers and staff members—from the recess aides to the janitors—agree on a way to address each issue.

At Eureka Elementary in the Rockwood district, cafeteria workers give tickets to students for every positive behavior they observe. Grade levels keep track of how many tickets they get and compete to win the week's "Golden Tray Award"—a spray-painted plastic cafeteria tray.

"It's unbelievable," Eureka Principal Brian Gentz said. "It has changed an entire lunch."

With the rules comes a common theme to make following them fun.

At Ritenour Middle School, Huskies get "paws for applause" for good behavior. At Ackerman School in Florissant, part of the Special School District, students' names are placed on a bee, which is taped next to a central beehive in a hallway. Halls Ferry students see handprints as a common theme, and they agree to follow the "high fives." There are six of them: Be safe, kind, cooperative, respectful, peaceful and responsible.

"When we do the high fives, you can earn good listening tickets and you can earn a lot of things, like lunch with a teacher," Halls Ferry second-grader Reggie Ross said.

The approach translates to good feelings all around, said Carol Fouse, principal of Hazelwood East Middle School in the Spanish Lake area. She recalled the story of a girl who visited her office at the end of last school year and asked, "Did you make up this school?"

"Yes, as far as coming up with the rules and everything," Fouse responded.

"Well, you did a good job," the girl said. "You know what? I haven't needed to fight this year. I got into fights all the time at elementary school, but I feel safe at this school."

"That," said Fouse, "was very cool."

Source: Valerie Schremp Hahn, "To teach good behavior, schools try more carrots and fewer sticks," from *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, December 18, 2008. Reprinted by permission of *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.

Questions and Activities

1. Are Positive Behavior Support (PBS) programs more consistent with Diana Baumrind's authoritarian or authoritative approaches? Why?
2. According to the article, schools that have a PBS program have rules and regulations for virtually every school setting and type of behavior. Despite their claimed success, do you think there are any drawbacks to having so many rules?
3. Find a nearby school that has a PBS program or something similar, observe for a day or two, and then talk to students, teachers, and administrators to see if they respond in the same way as those in the Halls Ferry Elementary School did to the author of this article.

Challenging Assumptions

Show Zero Tolerance for Zero Tolerance Policies

Zero tolerance policies mandate specific, nonnegotiable punishments, usually suspension from school, for specific offenses. These policies are typically aimed at curbing such serious offenses as fighting, sexual harassment, or bringing weapons or drugs to school. They are extremely popular, with as many as 75% of all schools having such policies. But, as we have pointed out many times in this book, popular ideas or practices are not always good ones. We believe that zero tolerance policies have more disadvantages than advantages and simply give the appearance that serious problems are being addressed. Here are several reasons why we believe educators should not support zero tolerance policies:

- The same punishment is handed out for violations that seem to be the same but involve very different behaviors and motives. Under the terms of a zero tolerance antidrug policy, do we really want to expel from school both the child who shares a zinc cough drop with a classmate and the child who brings marijuana to school? In the case of a zero tolerance for weapons policy, do we really want to suspend both the kindergarten student who brings a plastic knife to school to cut cookies with and the high school student who brings a large knife to school to threaten classmates?
- Zero tolerance policies do not teach students those behaviors that will produce positive reinforcement. This is why Skinner was adamantly opposed to the use of punishment as a means of modifying students' behavior.

- Zero tolerance policies result in more students being expelled from school than would otherwise be the case. For some students, being banished from an environment that they find aversive is positively reinforcing and encourages them to continue to exhibit those behaviors that produce suspension.
- Many research studies have failed to find a relationship between such policies and significant reductions in school violence.
- In some cases in which students were automatically expelled from school, extenuating circumstances should have led to a different decision.
- More often than not, courts will support an administrator's decision to suspend a student where the circumstances warrant, making zero tolerance policies redundant.

An analysis of the effectiveness of zero tolerance policies can be found in a report by the American Psychological Association's Zero Tolerance Task Force titled *Are Zero Tolerance Policies Effective in the Schools? An Evidentiary Review and Recommendations* (Skiba et al., 2006).

What Do You Think?

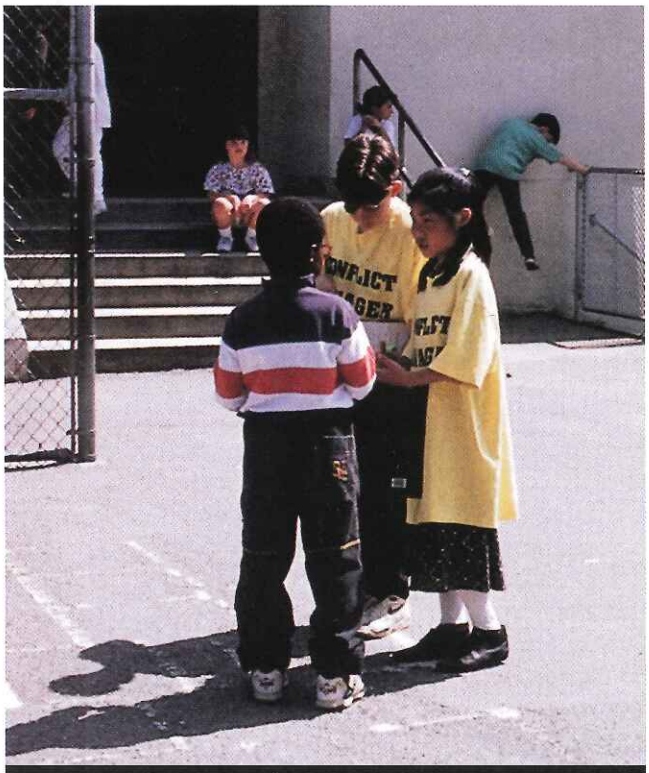
What are your views of zero tolerance policies? Have you seen them applied in your community? To explore this issue further, go to the "Challenging Assumptions" section of the textbook's Education CourseMate website.

confrontations between students. For example, picture two students who are arguing about a comment that struck one as an insult. As the accusations and counter-accusations escalate, one student threatens to hit the other. At that moment, one or two other students who are wearing T-shirts with the word *mediator* printed across the front and back intervene and ask if the two students would like help in resolving their problem. The mediating students may suggest that they all move to a quieter area where they can talk. The mediators then establish certain ground rules, such as that each student gets a turn to talk without being interrupted and that name calling is not allowed.

{ Students can play a role in helping others learn constructive ways to handle conflicts. }

RCCP was designed as a primary prevention program. This means that all students, even those not prone to violence, are taught how to prevent disagreements from becoming violent confrontations. In schools in which the program has been implemented, teachers have noted less physical violence in their classrooms, fewer insults and verbal put-downs, and greater spontaneous use of conflict resolution skills (Lantieri, 1995).

Nevertheless, educators noticed that the program did not produce desirable results with all students. So during the 1997–1998 school year an intervention component was added for children who exhibited behaviors that are associated with violent behavior in later years. School counselors and RCCP-trained teachers, working



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One approach to reducing school violence is to train students to mediate disputes between other students.

with groups of 15 to 20 children, engaged the students in activities that were designed to increase a sense of social responsibility (caring and cooperative behaviors, for example) and to develop such interpersonal skills as active listening.

The capstone of this 30-week program was the social action project. The group had to decide on and implement a community service project, such as fixing dinner for a family in need of assistance, making Easter baskets for the mentally disabled residents of a nearby center, or collecting books and art materials for a children's hospital. An evaluation of this new component reported improvements in listening skills, anger management skills, ability to share with others, relationships with teachers and students, self-esteem, and attitudes toward school (Lantieri, 1999). RCCP has been adopted by 400 schools in the United States and by schools in Brazil, England, and Puerto Rico (Roerden, 2001). An evaluation of RCCP conducted in more than 350 New York City classrooms reported gains in interpersonal negotiation strategies, prosocial behavior, and mathematics achievement, and decreases in aggressive behavior—but only in those classes in which teachers provided more instruction in RCCP techniques than the average teacher did (J. L. Brown, Roderick, Lantieri, & Aber, 2004).

Additional information about RCCP for the elementary and middle school grades can be found at http://esrnational.org by typing "RCCP" in the search box.

Pause & Reflect *If you were a primary or elementary grade teacher and had to choose between a program such as Positive Behavior Support (described in the Case in Print) and a peer mediation program such as the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program, which one would you choose? Why?*

Using Technology to Keep Students in School

As we pointed out previously, students who exhibit poor academic performance and believe that their teachers don't care about them are prone to engage in disruptive and violent behavior. They are also at risk for dropping out of school. In 2006, 9.3% of 16- to 24-year-olds were classified as dropouts (they were out of school and had not earned a diploma or alternative credential). The percentages for White, Black, and Latino youths were 5.8%, 10.7%, and 22.1%, respectively (Planty et al., 2009). Although these dropout rates have steadily fallen over the past 25 years, some believe that creative uses of technology can cause them to fall even faster. Here are a few examples of how some schools have used technology to reduce student absenteeism and the dropout rate:

- The Hueneme Elementary School District in Port Hueneme, California, created a "smart classroom" to help retain students who are at risk of dropping out. Students in this program were given experience in computerized robotics, computer-aided manufacturing, desktop publishing, and aeronautics and pneumatic technology. Average daily attendance for this program was close to 100% (Cardon & Christensen, 1998).
- The Azusa Unified School District in Azusa, California, made extensive use of an integrated learning system to encourage student attendance and retention. Students spent four class periods each day working at their computer terminals on English, reading, social studies, mathematics, and science. By the end of the program's second year, the average daily attendance was 96%, and 93% of students remained in the program from one year to the next (Cardon & Christensen, 1998).
- Virtual schools, a growing phenomenon that is also referred to as *distance education* or *distance learning*, are courses or entire programs (particularly at the high school level) that are available on the web and that may help students with

high absentee rates—such as the children of migrant workers, students whose school districts don't offer desired courses, and students who are homeschooled—to take courses and complete their schooling (Roblyer, 2006). During the 2007–2008 school year, over one million public school students were enrolled in virtual classes (M. R. Davis, 2009), and almost all states offer some type of online education option (K. Ash, 2009). Although such programs are praised for the flexibility they offer, they are also criticized because low-income students may have limited Internet access, because computer failures result in lost time and assignments, and because the lack of face-to-face interaction makes learning more difficult for some students (Podoll & Randle, 2005; Roblyer, 2006). What little research exists suggests that, overall, students who take courses online learn about as much as students who take the same courses in actual classrooms. What is not known at this point is why some students succeed in a virtual school environment whereas others do not (Bernard et al., 2004; Rice, 2006).